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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MEXICO 000353

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF, IO, NEA, SCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/27/2029

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KCRM](#) [MARR](#) [PINS](#) [PTER](#) [UNSC](#) [XA](#) [XF](#) [MX](#)

SUBJECT: THE U.S.-MEXICAN RELATIONSHIP: MEETING CHALLENGES,  
TAPPING OPPORTUNITIES IN 2009 (PART 2: MEXICO'S FOREIGN  
POLICY PRIORITIES ON THE UNSC: WHERE CAN WE BUILD SYNERGY?)

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Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Charles V. Barclay. Reason  
: 1.4 (b),(d).

¶1. (U) Action request for Department -- AF, IO, NEA, SCA.  
See paras. 2, 3, and 5.

¶2. (C) Summary. Mexico's successful bid to secure a seat on the UN Security Council (2009-2010) should be viewed through the prism of President Calderon's desire to raise Mexico's international profile. In Latin America, and Central America in particular, Mexico has sought to burnish its credentials as a non-ideological leader in the region. As such, we may look to Mexico to assume the lead on some regional issues but recognize that it will be far more sensitive than its predecessor in the Fox administration to being perceived as advancing a U.S. agenda. AmEmbassy Mexico has already established an informal mechanism with the directors of the Mexican Foreign Ministry's UNSC Office to ensure we are in close communication and coordination on key matters before the UNSC. We will look to the Department and USUN for early guidance regarding those issues on which we'll want to engage the Mexicans for support. We request the Department 1) consider sending a team of experts to brief Mexico's UNSC team on our views regarding UN activities in Africa; 2) provide more information regarding how Mexico might provide technical assistance in preparation for upcoming Afghanistan elections; and 3) facilitate contact between the UN SYG's Special Envoy to the Western Sahara Christopher Ross and Mexico. End Summary.

¶3. (C) Caution will likely define Mexico's approach to its membership on the UNSC. Fernando Gonzalez, the Deputy Director of the Foreign Ministry's (SRE) UNSC Office, told poloffs that in the past Mexico had sought to avoid membership on the UNSC in order to avoid a potential rift with the U.S. but that as Mexico's relationship with the U.S. had matured over time this was less a concern. That said, Mexico's Foreign Ministry is still defensive over President Fox's preemptive announcement in 2003, the last time Mexico was on the UNSC, that Mexico would not support a resolution authorizing the use of force in Iraq. Calderon may give lip service to grievances of the developing world and project independence from the U.S. but will hope to avoid crossing the U.S. on major issues. We should look for cooperation but

be aware of limitations in the following areas:

-- Combating Organized Crime/Rule of Law: Calderon has made this issue his highest priority domestically. Mexico's Gonzalez told poloffs that Mexico did not intend to force this issue onto the UN agenda but that to the extent it came up, Mexico would engage. We should look to Mexico to assume a lead role on this issue together with Colombia given the credibility Calderon can bring to bear. However, inasmuch as trafficking in small arms comes up, Mexico may be calling us to task to do more.

-- Africa: Mexico's Gonzalez told poloffs openly that Mexico does not bring much expertise to the UN role in Africa and would be looking to us for support. We understand Mexico is a member of the Sanctions Committees on Sudan, Somalia, and the Ivory Coast. In preparation for its role as President of the UNSC in April when the mandate for the UN Mission to the Western Sahara (MINURSO) comes up for renewal, Gonzalez asked us to facilitate contact with Ambassador Christopher Ross, the UN SYG's Personal Envoy to the Western Sahara.

-- Iran: Historically, Mexico has sought to assume a balanced posture on Iran -- defending Iran's right to develop nuclear energy but agreeing that it should honor its UN obligations; it has repeated its preference that these issues be addressed before the IAEA. Mexico will welcome briefs on our concerns about Iran's nuclear ambitions based on our intelligence estimates but we should be realistic in recognizing Mexico is unlikely to assume leadership on this issue.

-- Middle East/Israel: Mexico believes U.S. leadership on this is a prerequisite for a long-term settlement in the

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Middle East. At the same time, Mexico has proven predisposed to support UN resolutions that advance the "free determination of peoples," a "principle" that underpins its support for pro-Palestinian/anti-Israel resolutions before the UN. We should not expect significant GOM movement on the latter without noteworthy progress on the former.

-- Human Rights: Mexico wants to project itself as a human rights proponent on the international scene with a positive story to tell on its own democratic development. In keeping with this perspective, Mexico serves as a member of the UN Human Rights Council -- where we have been critical of its role in the past -- and a founding member of Partners for Demographic Governance. Under Calderon, however, Mexico has displayed more of its traditional reluctance to criticize human rights abusers, particularly in Latin America, including Cuba, potentially out of concern of appearing overtly sympathetic to U.S. views and compromising its regional leadership credentials. While we might look to Mexico to address these concerns privately, it will likely not take the lead on human rights concerns, particularly as they relate to the Western Hemisphere.

-- UN Peacekeeping Operations: Mexico heads the UNSC's Committee on MINUSTAH despite not providing any members to the mission. Recently, Mexico's Foreign Ministry (SRE) has signaled interest in participating in peacekeeping operations -- again as a way to project its leadership on the international scene. Calderon, however, is cautiously weighing this desire against what the domestic political environment will bear. He will want to shore up political support, including by determining whether Mexico's constitution would necessarily require Congressional approval, before committing Mexico to a PKO. Mexico's Foreign Relations Secretariat has already hosted two seminars on PKOs for military officials; Gonzalez suggested they were well received.

Gonzalez has indicated that if Mexico decides to participate in a PKO, its initial inputs will be on a very modest level, and Mexico would provide elements that would assume a support

role, focused on institution-building in post-conflict societies, rather than direct peace-keeping/enforcement. On 1/23, pending more information, Gonzalez signaled a willingness to explore with Mexico's Federal Election Institute (IFE) the possibility of lending Afghanistan some assistance in preparing for upcoming elections. Given its record of contact with the GOM on this issue, we should look to work through Canada in encouraging Mexico to consider participation in PKOs.

¶4. (C) Comment. Notwithstanding Mexico's desire to be a world player, domestic politics and historical defaults will still bear on Mexico decisions on UNSC and in the region. It may hope to avoid a confrontation with the U.S. but will prove just as averse to aligning itself too closely to Washington priorities. It would be a mistake to look to Mexico to assume the lead on issues such as Iraq, Iran, or Afghanistan where it perceives little at stake in terms of its national interests. It is also not likely that Mexico will take a critical stance on Cuba particularly in view of its efforts to improve bilateral relations. On the other hand, Mexico wants to assume the mantle of leadership in Central America and on regional efforts to combat organized crime. We need to engage Mexico early on issues where we are looking for its support in the UNSC. Mexico won't always see things our way but by appealing to its ambitions it be viewed as a leader and demonstrating that we don't regard its support or its opposition as a mere afterthought, we will gain its goodwill and hopefully its vote on issues important to us.

¶5. (SBU) Action Requests. 1) Department for IO, AF: SRE's Gonzalez welcomed a visit by USG experts on UN activities in Africa in advance of Mexico's UNSC Presidency in April. We request the Department consider sending a team of experts to Mexico in the coming month with a view to sensitizing it to our concerns and objectives. 2) Department for SCA: We request the Department provide information about how Mexico

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might contribute to election activities in Afghanistan given its expertise in this area and its willingness to consider providing assistance. 3) Department for IO, NEA: We request the Department's assistance with facilitating contact between the UN SYG's Personal Envoy to the Western Sahara Christopher Ross and the GOM. End Action Requests. Visit Mexico City's Classified Web Site at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/mexicocity> and the North American Partnership Blog at <http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/nap/> BASSETT